

TARGETING STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: FACTORS AFFECTING RETENTION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST YEAR STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE

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AIMS

Through surveys, results and LMS data, this study investigates the actions and attributes of first-year students and their possible effects on academic achievement. The purpose is to provide course co-ordinators with information to target technological and face-to-face strategies enhancing retention and success. Preliminary data is reported.

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

Whilst investigation has been done into the first-year experience (Baik, Naylor & Arkoudis, 2015; Naylor, Baik & Arkoudis, 2017), less attention is paid to underlying factors from students' backgrounds (and thereby out of university control). A 2008 review of Adelaide University students linked unmet expectations of teacher feedback and availability to success (Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews & Nordstrom, 2008). However, questions about students' proactive approach to learning, and effective modes of support, were absent.

MAIN ARGUMENT

Many faculties offer Drop-In centres and mentoring as part of their learning design. However, preliminary data from this study suggests 41% of students rarely or never access this. Furthermore, 55% of school-arrivers report levels of individualised teaching strategies that are inconsistent with university's independent study environment.

CONCLUSIONS

Data analysis is underway at the time of abstract submission. Initial results suggest university efforts to support students may be unlikely to enhance learning and retention if students must be proactive to benefit. Consequently, universities may wish to partner with schools to share findings, and to incentivise successful student study behaviour.

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